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ABSTRACT

The future and past of adult continuing education are discussed. Four predictions are made concerning the future of Extension in the university: (1) within the next 20 years or so, the turning over to the established units of the university the part-time credit, extended university, open university activity; (2) the expanded development of continuing professional education as a major line of Extension work; (3) an expanded development of general cultural education; and (4) the development of compulsory adult education. The present day is said to be a time of change similar to that which prevailed in the Renaissance, in the 15th and early 16th century. The heritage of the university is described by quotations from Thomas More's "Utopia," by descriptions of university life in the 15th century, and by descriptions of 11th and 12th century cathedral schools and cloisters of Italy. These descriptions point up the fact that at its beginning, the university was primarily an action program in adult and continuing education, the first students being mature people in search of knowledge to develop solutions to social problems. The next dimension in universities is seen as the development of post-professional, post-degree continuing education for mature men and women, with roots that go back to the beginning of universities. (DB)

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A VIEW FROM THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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In a meeting about the future, the temptation is well-nigh irresistible to go off into the wild blue yonder about such subjects as--"Whither the university?"--or "The future of extension." So, I chose this title because I remembered a wonderfully disdainful phrase I'd heard last year in a seminar at the University of Edinburgh by the Principal of that city's College of Further Education. Referring to a fantasizing future-oriented lecturer, he dismissed him thus: "The speaker," he said, "extrapolates into the empyrean." I want to resist that impulse.

There is a relaxed quality to conferences on the future, except, of course, if they are budget conferences. Which leads one to ask, "Who owns the future?" It is, of course, a delightful public property, available to all who want to visit, but the people who really put themselves on the line when it comes to discussion of next year or the next five or ten are not the futurists, by and large, but the people like us who have a real stake, managers of enterprises to whom such investigations are crucial. No wonder that governors, chancellors and other administrators bring up their heaviest guns of science and intellect--these days computerized extrapolations of tomorrow and tomorrow. And, oh, how they hope they're right!

It has been that way throughout history. The Pythian Oracle of Delphi was not a figure of romance or classical scholarship for those who consulted her. Roman priests who cut open birds to look at and smell and read the entrails were at least as functional members of their society as sociologists and other scientific readers of computer printouts today. Herman Kahn is the peer of Cecco D'Ascoli, professor of astrology at the University of Bologna in the 14th century. It may be sobering to note that Cecco, prince of the astrologers of the Middle Ages, was burned at the stake by the Florentine Inquisition in 1327. Who knows what may happen to those of us daring enough to prophesy and predict--and put our money where our mouths are? Probably the worst that can happen is that, if we're wrong in the short or the middle run, we'll lose our jobs or federal contracts. But that's bad enough, and I assume that is why we are here--to make as well-informed guesses about the next decade or generation as we can and keep extension a flourishing part of the university. To look at the future is a practical enterprise.

This is a conference on the future, so before I take you back in our time machine to the 15th century and even the 12th, let me go forward and put myself on the line to make several large forecasts, which I will seek to document and support, not only by extension from what is happening today, but by going back to what happened in history. My predictions have the advantage of being already true--or almost. This fact, to my mind, does not constitute an evasion of my responsibility as a speaker. I am indebted to novelist Kay Boyle and poet Howard Nemerov for the concept that "prophecy is less a look into the future than it is an accurate recognition of what is before our hesitant eyes." Or to quote another philosopher of our time, Yogi Berra, "You can observe a lot just by looking." Consulting our own experience is as important as listening to the specialized authorities on the future who may unhappily conform to that definition of an expert I heard the other day: "An expert is one who avoids small errors as he swoops toward the grand fallacy."

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In a few minutes I want to comment briefly on the older history of universities and of continuing education because I believe we can see more clearly where we are going, if we know not only the present, but our roots. First, however, my predictions:

I'll begin by quoting from the first paragraph of a special report adopted last month and published as a policy guideline by the prestigious American Council on Education. This has been distributed to everyone here because it is a useful as well as highly significant position paper, coming in particular from its authoritative source. Here is the first paragraph.

"To serve the nation and its people in the decades ahead, colleges and universities and those who support them are setting aside three traditional assumptions that in the past have controlled much of what they have done:

- The assumption that college students are all young and financially dependent.

- The assumption that there is a fundamental difference between what is learned in residence and what is learned in extension courses or independently.

- The assumption that the ideal college serves an essentially middle class clientele and has no important responsibilities to disadvantaged urban and rural populations."

Well, well, one says. The university establishment has caught up with extension. The report itself, which you will read at leisure, will be helpful and cautionary at the same time. It tells us clearly that adult education is now the concern of the whole university and not only of us in Extension. As had happened time and again in our recent past, Extension may do itself out of a job. And I agree with Richard Matre's prediction in a CSLEA sponsored symposium in 1965 on the future of the evening college. He said: "The future direction of the evening college is toward rapid obsolescence." That is, he foresaw, and I believe we can presently note generally, the changing structure of the provision of part-time degree credit instruction. The ACE report makes it clear that there are structural changes already and more in early prospect.

Extension and the evening college, of course, are not the same thing. But to the extent that Extension, including evening colleges, has provided such instruction, the function is being intruded upon by legitimately interested power groups in the rest of the university. This should not disturb us unduly. Indeed, it seems desirable, to the extent that we live up to our flaunted image of being "the growing edge of the university," that we ourselves should seek sound ways to regularize the transfer of such work to the undergraduate and graduate schools of our institutions. We can't have it both ways: either we seek to build up our fiefdoms in the institution (which I'm against because it's both unsuitable and impossible), or we continue to perform a frontier role for higher education (which I'm for, because this is our job).

So, my first prediction:

I foresee within the next twenty years or so, the turning over to the established units of the university the part-time credit, extended university, open university activity, however expressed in contemporary academic idiom. Let

the faculties of the established undergraduate and graduate schools deal with the matter of part-time instruction. I hope that they will consult us because it will be useful to them and to students since we do know many things about adult students and learning that they should know, too. But we have other work to do. So I come to a summary statement of what I see our positive tasks to be: Looking at what is happening, I see the following major lines to be developed, which brings me to--

My second prediction:

I foresee the expanded development of continuing professional education as a major line of our work, although I see that the powerful interests of professional schools in the university and of professional groups that may or may not be represented by formal collegiate structure in the university will definitely have to be accommodated. But extension is the most practical instrument available to be used by the professional schools and by the professions outside. Moreover, we are the most suitable arm of the university to coordinate the educational interests of the two groups I've just cited and to relate them to the growing interest in such instruction of government regulatory bodies. An equilibrium needs to be established among these interests, including government, and unless there were a new social invention to replace extension, we are the best tool around to accomplish the continuing education of professionals.

It is by no means inevitable that this task will fall to us without imaginative and responsible effort from us. Our peers--our hungry peers these days--in other parts of the university will only begrudingly show foresight enough to support us. But they can't cope with the kind of detail and organization involved--and their other purposes of graduate and undergraduate teaching and research, as they consider them, coupled with an energetic demonstration of our own capability, should persuade them that extension is the logical instrument. The professional organizations, too, are in much the same situation.

Moreover, there are larger questions. I don't believe that even so arrogantly based a profession as medicine can function in continuing education by taking account only of itself, independent of broader social needs for the delivery of health services. Every profession, of course, defines itself by protecting its own standards, but however complex its skills and specialist knowledge, in the final analysis, a profession is a group responsible to organized society for its function.

For this audience I do not have to spell out the obvious need for continuing education of all professions and skilled occupations. However, if we in extension are to have an important part of the action, we must be more than bookkeepers, we must be educators: We must deal with educational issues not piecemeal, that is--profession by profession--or on an ad hoc administrative response basis, that is--the program of the moment this year or next--but we must provide them all with the opportunity to exchange knowledge, method, and organization. The comparative study of professions, as our prescient colleague, Cyril Houle, has told us, should be part of our own professional approach today. We must help professionals educate themselves, not merely add new skills to old. Extension right now is the only group equipped to do that, and we are not thinking enough about the matter. We haven't generalized from the considerable activity we're engaged upon, and we haven't developed theoretic positions of consequence. We haven't even, God save the mark, asked for funding to help us in preliminary studies. If we don't organize ourselves to do the job right, believe me, somebody else will.

My third prediction is obvious, I think:

I foresee an expanded development of general cultural education--not only in the humanities but studies calling for syntheses of knowledge, involving not only the liberal arts, but liberal sciences and social sciences. I mean, for example, further expansion of our field work in the natural environment. More broadly, I think that a mass leisure and consuming society and a heavily populated world have developed a need for a range of programs relating to human relationships of all kinds. A hundred and fifty years ago, people went in hordes to attend popular lectures on chemistry and physics. That was in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Today, it is our imaginatively conceived programs on new sexual relationships, on the possibility of extra-sensory communication, that attract mature men and women. This is the expression of contemporary culture. Such activity will be, even more than now, essentially credit free in character. The job can only be done by higher education. As presently organized, this means extension in universities, although it is probable that community colleges will ask for and get a share of the work.

Finally, I see these developments--these last two--continuing professional education and general education for adults--in the framework of compulsion. That is, I foresee compulsory adult education, just as we have compulsory education for children.

You may think this rash and 1984-ish, but all I am doing is giving a name to what is already taking place, by legislative mandate, in the professions. As an example, in the state of California--and California is not unique--we already have laws on the books requiring continuing education of practitioners to maintain or renew licenses in the fields of optometry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine. Early in this month, I received an announcement from the California State Board of Accountancy. In response to legislative directives, this state agency, after consultation with the professional groups, spelled out its draft program--they set a date of July 1, 1973 to begin it--requiring 80 hours of further study every two years of accountants in public practice. Thus, CPA's in this state will be denied relicensing if they don't satisfy this continuing education requirement every two years--and the rules specify that the hours can't be cumulative beyond two years.

That can only be defined as compulsory adult education. And it is a pattern inevitable for other skilled occupations and professions. An ever more complex technological society must require lifelong education of its cadres of professional and managerial leadership. Otherwise, social disaster looms. Education is not a natural process for human beings; it is social. It's possible that the reverse process--of de-education--is all too natural. Maybe a metaphorical equivalent of the second law of thermodynamics is at work: If people do not continue to learn, they lose what they know, inexorably they forget what they have already learned. In this respect, what is the difference between a professional engineer, dietitian, physicist or classicist, and a professional golfer or pianist who practice many hours a day? Answer: None.

Will such legal compulsion exist in the area of general cultural education of adults? I hope not. But it exists in adult basic education, doesn't it? To receive welfare benefits, in several states (in Illinois as early as 1962 and 1963) poor people (adults) are required to take some vocational and literacy training.

As higher adult educators, we have a professional mind set toward freedom of educational choice. In the past, we have proudly said that ours is not a captive audience. But if we read the signs aright, we must see that some kinds of educational compulsion are a feature of a mass society. For instance, we see in China, with 800 million people, quite rigid curricula of political and social education required of adults as part of national technique and strategy.

On the optimistic side: Educate people at all and they tend to start thinking for themselves. Even our emerging cassette culture won't break that human habit in the long run. Because I'm an optimist, I don't believe the United States will have legally established general cultural programs soon, for adults. The paradox, of course, is that we will have them if our population, particularly of the educated, fails to maintain its level of learning voluntarily. Lifelong learning is thus a moral responsibility of intelligence and the major defense of individual freedom. So a compelling reason for adult education--a social compulsion, if not legal, remains. And we have work to do. The protection of human individuality lies in open access to ideas, and satisfaction of a major ethical responsibility for us, as adult educators, depends on our ability to preserve and cultivate that kind of access.

Ours is a time of change similar to that which prevailed in the Renaissance, in the time of the New Learning of the 15th and early 16th century. That was when Greek came into the university curriculum because the world was changing, and access to Greek thought was a tool both to the future, and of freedom. Thomas More in the 1490's was taken out of Oxford after a few months because his father was fearful of his studying Greek, a dangerous subject that gave people new ideas. Greek didn't retain that function very long, but it's important to understand that the New Learning that ushered in modern history had as a major tool the study of Ancient Greek.

Can we, too, get something from the past?

As we put the time machine in reverse to go back 500 and even 900 years, let us take with us as reading matter a text from one of the wisest of our contemporaries in higher education, Eric Ashby (Master of Clare College, Cambridge). Ashby, it was, who some twenty years ago pointed out that just as drivers' licenses had to be renewed on the basis of maintained skill, so should college degrees. Speaking in 1967 on "Higher Education in Tomorrow's World," Sir Eric said--and let me quote a long paragraph.

"A university is a mechanism for the inheritance of the western style of civilization. It preserves, transmits, and enriches learning, and it undergoes evolution as animals and plants do. Like animals and plants, universities are products of heredity and environment. The American university derives its heredity from Europe (in origin, it is an Anglo-German hybrid), but the American environment has transformed it into a new species of institution, which is now being successfully transplanted to other parts of the world. Now I come to my point. It is possible to make some useful predictions about the heredity of universities in the year 2000. It is not possible to make useful predictions about the social environment in which universities are likely to operate. If you doubt this, ask yourselves whether, in 1927, you could have imagined a society where computers book air passages, connect telephone calls; make out wage sheets; where plastic parts can be fitted into human beings; and where the world's source of energy is assured through the application of an algebraic formula discovered by a German-Jewish

mathematician. A few novelists catch glimpses of this world; but conferences of academics, never. That is why I believe that it is unprofitable (except for writers of fiction), to reflect on the future of the environment of universities, but it is profitable to reflect on the future of their heredity. To the question: How can universities prepare students for the year 2000? We can propose half an answer based on our understanding of the inner logic of universities; but not the other half, which would demand an understanding of society in the year 2000."

With that felicitous notion, the future of our heredity, let us go back, because if you are like me, we share a relative ignorance of the university heritage. My observations here are drawn largely from secondary sources--medieval Latin not being my strong point. But the historians of the universities in the Middle Ages have many things to say which, if we put them together, make an interesting case to argue that adult students, in that fine phrase of Dean Acheson, were present at the creation.

When Thomas More was hoicked out of Oxford, his father put him in Lincoln's Inn, one of the Inns of Court, still the law schools of Britain. He was admitted to the bar at 18, in 1496. But that doesn't necessarily mean he was all that precocious. If young men went to the university at the age of 12 or 14, remember that in the thinking of the Middle Ages, they were not children--young, yes, but not children. More did learn Greek himself after getting away from direct parental control. Friend of Erasmus, leading intellectual, More was perhaps the first futurist of the modern era. Let me read a few lines from Paul Turner's lively new English translation of More's Utopia, published first in 1516:

"In Utopia they have a six-hour working day--three hours in the morning, then lunch--then a two-hour break--then three more hours in the afternoon, followed by supper. They go to bed at 8 p.m. and sleep for eight hours. All the rest of the twenty-four they're free to do what they like--not to waste their time in idleness or self-indulgence, but to make good use of it in some congenial activity. Most people spend these free periods on further education, for there are public lectures first thing every morning. Attendance is quite voluntary, except for those picked out for academic training, but men and women of all classes go crowding in to hear them--I mean, different people go to different lectures, just as the spirit moves them....

"They never force people to work unnecessarily, for the main purpose of their whole economy is to give each person as much time free from physical drudgery as the needs of the community will allow, so that he can cultivate his mind--which they regard as the secret of a happy life....

"Admittedly, no one's allowed to become a full-time student, except for the very few in each town who appear as children to possess unusual gifts, outstanding intelligence, and special aptitude for academic research. But every child receives a primary education, and most men and women go on educating themselves all their lives..."

Such was a view of the educational future advanced by Thomas More, born in 1478. It might disturb us as amateur futurologists to reflect on the fact that More died on the block, if for reasons not directly related to his authorship.

More extreme women's lib advocates might hold that he got what he deserved. After all, Utopia required that wives kneel down monthly before their husbands and "confess all their sins of omission and commission, and ask to be forgiven." As More maintained, "This gets rid of any little grudges that may have clouded the domestic atmosphere..."

It's true, too, that More's Utopia was a rather drab place. Everyone wore the same clothes. And it anticipated the horrors of current centralized computer banks: "Everyone," said More's narrator, "Has his eye on you, so you're practically forced to get on with your job, and make some proper use of your spare time."

Let us take a brief look at what life was like in the universities of the 15th century. The intellectual action came at the end of the century. The first established institutions were already 300 years old. Many universities like Bologna and Oxford were putting up their own buildings instead of renting. The collegiate structure of universities established in previous centuries was being firmed up by such buildings, physical places, owned by the communities of scholars. All over Europe as new countries were being formed and as new heresies came on the scene and as the church sought to be a coalescing force and consolidate its power, new universities were being established. Hastings Rashdall, the 19th century historian of the universities of the Middle Ages, said about Oxford that the 1490's were the most glorious decade in its history.

Law and order was beginning to be imposed upon the medieval rabble of students and faculty. In its history so far, the scholars had established themselves as guilds and had been quite protected from prosecution and had established special rights in the cities in which the universities were located. Francois Villon, pimp, thief and murderer, and arch example of the academic underworld of the Left Bank, master of arts of the University of Paris, was sentenced to death in the 1450's. A century earlier he might not even have been bothered. Even so, he finally evaded the hangman and accepted banishment from Paris. Discipline was slow in coming.

Not entirely as a digression, let me spend a moment or two on this matter of crime. Although in the 15th century the records show for the first time that while punishments were being imposed for university or civil offense, getting away with murder was still not at all uncommon for students and faculty alike. Foretelling the future and other heresies, of course, were quite another thing and tended to be severely punished. Rashdall tells the story: "At Louvain we find one or two cases of flogging ordered by the faculty of arts for homicide or other grave offenses." He then footnotes this comment without a smile, "Later we find corporal punishment denounced on any artist (student) under 25 who sells his books without permission of his regent (teacher)."

At the Bavarian university of Ingolstadt, founded in 1472, a student killed another in a drunken quarrel at a 'symposium'. The archives tell us, "The University resolved on the confiscation of his scholastic effects and garments and therewith contented, did not proceed to the punishment of expulsion (1479)." But Rashdall does say dryly, "It is satisfactory to add that a Prague Master of Arts believed to have assisted in cutting the throat of a Friar Bishop, was actually expelled."

It was the turbulent time of the Renaissance: of new needs in society, of emergent nations and changing politics; the English Henry VI, whose money and piety built the magnificant chapel of King's college, Cambridge; of Machiavelli; of Lorenzo the Magnificent; of Erasmus; for universities of new students, new ideas, decisively of the New Learning.

Do not think that these were all small institutions in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Subject to war and pestilence, enrollments waxed and waned, but several universities were quite large. As an instance, the law faculty of Bologna, leaving out those of medicine, theology and the arts in its first two or three hundred years, frequently had more than 10,000 students enrolled. As the

universities took on new life, their major social purpose, that of educating the basic cadres to staff the bureaucracies and technologies--law, medicine, theology--that purpose continued. And so did their intellectual purpose: to the glory of God, to be sure, but in that questioning, searching way that has characterized universities from their beginnings.

Continuing education? These universities, in addition to younger students, frequently housed men who were taking sabbaticals in reverse, leaving as they could, their country parishes or their practices as notaries, to enjoy the fleshpots of the large cities, and perhaps take higher degrees. There were many older students at the universities; and if the available figures are any indication, relatively fewer of them than now, younger or older, finally took degrees. In point of fact, the higher degrees themselves involved long courses of study. In Paris, the rules permitted that the doctorate of divinity be awarded only after the age of 35.

Well, how does such a miscellany bear on our future now? The parallels are clear enough. The universities 500 years ago, like ours, were functional instruments of society, interacting with it, sending up popes, cardinals, heretics, lawyers, doctors, notaries, educating rich men and poor, teaching the leadership of the day, and filling the ranks of the middle management of Christendom and of the emerging nation states. The universities were places of intellectual and social struggle. They were intertwined with the life of the time. As an old rhyme goes:

When England's at strife,
Oxford's at knife.

Finally, let us go back to the origin of the universities, some nine hundred years ago in the 11th and 12th century cathedral schools and cloisters of Italy. The Italian city states were thriving, developing commerce, trade and new government, which needed, above all else, law. They needed trained judges and lawyers, but first someone had to rediscover Roman law and develop it further to serve the complexities of business relationships in the emerging principalities and republics. Hence the fact that the first universities of Northern Italy were law schools, not only of canon, but of civil law.

Moreover, you will recall that these were guilds of students who exercised authority to compel their professors to lecture to their schedule and to keep to student-dictated standards of performance. The students even had authority to give permission for their masters to leave the city. How, you may ask, did this form of governance come about? It is puzzling, until you know one central fact: that these first students were mature men, they were adult students. They had come together from church and civil positions because of the urgent need to learn from the past, to revise Roman law. Before young people can be taught, older people, the generation in command, have to know what to teach, have to study and formulate a curriculum.

So the search into the past rewards us with the discovery that at its beginning, the university was first of all an action program in adult and continuing education. It is not hyperbole to state that the very first students of the university were the same that we know in extension, mature people in search of knowledge to develop solutions to urgent social problems. Here is a neglected tradition in our institutional history, which now arises again to be given new life as we deal today with what is unquestionably the next adventure in universities--the development of post-professional, post-degree continuing education for mature men and women. This "new" dimension of higher education has deep roots--we in extension have roots--that go back to the beginning.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, as I end this talk, I must ask latitude for some extravagance of expression. For we have come full circle. The view from the 15th century or the 12th enriches our view. We see that the procession led by Irnerius at Bologna, Abelard at Paris, and Grosseteste at Oxford includes us, not begging on the fringes but in the midst, carrying a standard of great antiquity. And more than ancient, more than picturesque, it is the banner that will lead the academic procession into the 21st century.

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